

Prabuddha Bharata

Anse! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS THE DEVOTEE—I

GOD, His scripture and His devotee are all to be regarded as one, i. e., with equal reverence.

WHAT is the state which a *siddha* attains? (*Siddha* means (1) perfect, (2) well-cooked.) As a potato or a brinjal, when boiled properly (*siddha*), becomes soft and sweet, so when a man reaches perfection (*siddha*), he becomes all humility and tenderness.

OF the many kinds of *siddhas* found in this world, there are,

(1) The *svapna siddhas*, who attain perfection by means of dream inspiration.

(2) The *mantra siddhas*, who attain perfection by means of any sacred mantra (word).

(3) The *hathât siddhas*, who attain perfection suddenly. As a poor man may suddenly become rich by finding a hidden treasure, or by marrying into a rich family, so many ordinary people become pure all of a sudden, and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

(4) The *kripâ siddhas*, who attain perfection through the manifest grace of the Almighty, as a poor man is made wealthy by the kindness of a king.

(5) The *nitya siddhas*, who are ever-perfect. As the vine of a gourd or pumpkin

brings forth its fruit first and then its flower, so the ever-perfect is born a *siddha* (fruit) and all his seeming exertions after perfection (flower) are merely for the sake of setting examples to humanity.

THE iron, once converted into gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone, may be kept under the earth or thrown into a rubbish-heap, but it will remain gold, and never return to its former condition. Similar is the case with one who has once touched the feet of the Almighty. Whether he dwells in the bustle of the world, or in the solitude of the forest, nothing can ever contaminate him.

THE steel sword turns into gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone, and though it retains its former form it becomes incapable of piercing any one. Similarly, the outward form of a man, who has touched the feet of the Almighty, is not changed, but he no longer doeth any evil.

SHE who has a king for her lover, does she accept the addresses of a street beggar? So the soul, that has once found favour in the sight of the Lord, does not want the paltry things of this world.

OCCASIONAL NOTES

PERHAPS the statement will seem strange to some that we can choose our thoughts. But a little reflection (and what is better, a little experiment) will show that it is so.

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We can look upon thoughts as commodities in a market. We need not take what we do not want.

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Each human brain is a thoroughfare of thought. Of the passers-by we need not know, much less welcome home, all.

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The ignorant take in all thoughts indiscriminately that happen to come along. They do not know that they have the same power of choice in thoughts as they have in articles of food or dress. And since thought is much more vital than food or dress, its indiscriminate use is fraught with worse effects than that of food or dress ever could be.

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Thoughts can be broadly classified under two heads, positive and negative. Positive thoughts are constructive, the others destructive.

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Thoughts of 'what can now be' are positive, those of 'what might have been' are negative.

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Those wishing for despondency and depression, weakness and unhappiness, should carefully receive and harbour the negative thoughts. They should, for instance, give themselves over to mentally stabbing themselves (repenting) for days on account of what they might have done in lieu of what they did. They should never think thus: Well, I made a mistake, but bygones are bygones, let me see what I can do now to mend matters. They should go on dwelling upon

some loss, failure or weakness, worrying and becoming morbid all the time, thus depleting their will, the vehicle of their spiritual self, so that each fresh foible or negative thought that comes along may find them easier prey than its predecessor. They should, instead of directing their thought energy toward poise or creative action, set it against self, distracting, dissipating, stabbing and weakening self, so that they may be sources of misery to themselves and others.

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Those that desire for success and happiness for themselves as well as for others should carefully cultivate the positive thoughts. Directly as a thought makes its appearance, find out if it smells of the dead past alone. If it does, put it by and use it to suggest its reverse. Make it a bridge to cross over to the other side. No thought but has its opposite.

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To be able to think positively it is essential to perfect the habit of appraising every thought before letting it in. Unless there be the constant watch and alertness to find out the character of each new comer, unwelcome strangers insinuating as friends might be discovered controlling important brain centres, when freedom from their friendship and ousting them from their position are well-nigh beyond the average human. Take care of your thoughts and you will be able to take care of the world.

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In noticing Mr. Douglas Sladen's book "Queer Things About Japan" Mr. O'Connor in his bright *T. P.'s Weekly* observes:

"When one thinks of the pleasures and the holidays, so costly and often so coarse, of our masses in Western countries, and then reads a description like this, it makes one for a

moment feel that the true philosophy of living is the secret of the East rather than of the West.

"When one has just come to this speculation as to the superiority of the East over the West, one turns to another page of this book, and at once one's whole point of view is changed. The position of woman is still the reproach of all, or nearly all, the Orient."

We feel the absolute justness of the impeachment. It is driven home to our hearts. We believe in decreasing the denominator of desire of one's fraction of life. We hold fast to the doctrine of plain living and high thinking. We know it is the true philosophy of living and we know that East is the West's superior in having it. But like a man of great powers kept back by odds from using them, and thus forced to eat his heart out and degenerate, the East notwithstanding its many excellences, has degenerated for keeping its mother under, thus wasting and turning against itself the mighty social and spiritual force represented by woman. And have we sufficiently awakened to the fact?

I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, but a right understanding of the relation between what *he* can

do and say, and the rest of the world's sayings and doings.—Ruskin.

Ruskin's characterisation of humility is excellent, but it is of the intellect, intellectual. There is another humility, the humility of the heart. When the influx of the Divine Spirit has inundated a heart, its weaknesses and wounds healed and its health restored, its creases of virtue and vice straightened out and its forces set free, the heart is bowed down by the weight of Divinity. This is humility of the heart. The perception of the Most High in all forms, man or worm, the sight of the play of the Infinite and the Almighty in solar systems and atoms stir the fulness of its feelings to constant overflow. The result is the melting away of the stiff ram-rod like element in the ego, and consequent spontaneous humility, which is nothing short of immediate recognition of the All-Self in all beings and unceasing worship and prostration—the eternal flowing out of the river to fall in the ocean.

'The Art of helping God' is the newest phrase of the new philosophy of the new West. Poor God! He requires help badly indeed! And when our brethren are tired of helping God, we suppose they would devise some means of schooling God to help Himself! Verily our temperaments are irrepressible.

BRAHMACHARYA

WHATEVER a man thinks, that he becomes." This does not carry the implication, as many erroneously think, that external conditions have no part in forming the character of man. In fact they greatly influence the shaping of our thoughts. It would be only mentioning a patent fact to say that a man's thought is often inspired by the environment in which he moves and the actions he does, the word action meaning everything he performs through his senses,—

seeing, hearing, doing manual works, &c.

In order to make life an exact image of the ideal, one has to do such works, hear such words, see such sights and so on, as will intensify in one the desire to realize the ideal—make one constantly think of it, love it. In other words, one has to place oneself in favourable surroundings.

In religion, the system of Brahmacharya is the most efficient means of bringing its votaries under favourable conditions. The

primary conditions of Brahmacharya are living with the Guru and continence.

The Brahmachari, having none of those cares and anxieties which a man having the burden of family responsibilities on his shoulder is often subject to and which forcibly draw his mind away from the ideal, is in full possession of his own mind. He is at liberty to apply it whatever way he likes best. Then there is the positive influence of the Guru. The example of peace, that holiness begets, manifested in the Guru, the struggle for the same ideal expressed in the lives of the fellow disciples, and, above all, the work he does unselfishly for them, all bring constantly home to his mind the end in view more forcibly than anything else could do.

But the advantages derived from living with the Guru will be of little avail to the disciple if he lacks the mental power to grasp high moral and spiritual ideas and make them a part of himself. It is one thing to understand an ideal intellectually and it is quite another to assimilate it so as to make it the guiding principle of life. It is here that the importance of 'thought' comes in. Without deep thought—meditation—the good ideas that come from outside cannot be impressed on the heart and cannot therefore be converted into living powers for good. This power of the mind to meditate, to collect itself upon one particular subject of thought, is acquired through continence. The Yogis claim that the highest form of energy in the human body is stored up in the brain and they call it *Ojas*. A man's mental strength is in proportion to the quantity of *Ojas* there is in him. They also say that sex energy, expressed in sexual thoughts, words or deeds, if checked and controlled, becomes easily converted into *Ojas*. That is also why Brahmacharya is inculcated by the teachers of religion.

The ideal of religion being the highest, its realization requires the greatest concentration

of the mind. The attachment which springs up between man and woman and their progeny splits up the mind, as it were, into many parts, each of which is taken up by a separate individual. And the concentration of such a mind does indeed baffle the best endeavours. Again, widened family relations mean selfishness with most of us, and fighting against the purpose of religion which demands that the self should be expanded and fold in its embrace the whole of man, the whole of existence.

Lifelong Brahmacharya is the *sine qua non* of religion. But it does also immense good to would-be family-men who do not wish to devote themselves wholly to religion. No man can achieve anything great and good without having a lofty ideal before him and an indomitable will to live up to it. Physical and mental vigour, strong moral stamina, "muscles of iron and nerves of steel inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is built," in the words of Swami Vivekananda, are wanted in the making of the householder and the Samyasi alike. The system of Brahmacharya provides these equipments in the most effective way.

In the present state of our country when privation and its attendant evils are eating into the vitals of the nation, a wide spread of the Brahmacharya system is sure to prove a great blessing. The painful spectacles of misery, presented at every turn—poor weaklings weighed down by family burdens brought on by early marriage—will disappear to a considerable extent if the young men of our country are not married before they have thoroughly understood what a family life truly means. Marriage, marriage, marriage—it is heart-rending to see how strength, manhood, Kshattra-Virya and Brahma-Teja are being sacrificed at the altar of this brutality they call marriage!

INCARNATION OF GOD

ALMIGHTY, omniscient, one without a second, infinite, and similar other attributes are given to God. They are born of the attempts to describe the worshipped as transcending the limitations of the worshipper. Such attempts are observable even in the most crude forms of worship. The ghost worshipper believes that the ghost can pass through air and do many extraordinary things which he cannot. In ancestor worship, the departed souls are supposed to possess powers which their descendants on earth do not.

As very few realize God and as it is the question of questions if He can ever be conceived, much less realized, in His entirety, nothing can be more presumptuous than to dogmatically assert ideas about the real nature of God. The fact is that God is an unknown entity and the attributes given to Him are only human ideas of infiniteness. Just as the ghost worshipper associates extraordinary powers with the ghost whom perhaps he never sees, the advanced man associates his ideas of infiniteness with God whose real nature perhaps he can never conceive. The ideas of infiniteness attributed to God broaden with the broadening of his mind and are different with different men. Every religion is based upon one or other of man's ideas of infinity. The lower infinity (Apara-Brahman) of the non-dualist Vedantin is an infinite which is the summation of an infinite number of finite parts. It is an omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient Being. His higher infinity (Para-Brahman) is an infinite that is infinite at every point, is the only one infinite and besides which there is nothing else. Hence, looked at from the Para-Brahman point of view, the lower Brahman as well as soul and matter are non-

existent ; otherwise their existence is real. The infinity of the qualified non-dualist is an infinite which is the summation of infinite finite parts. It is the only one infinite, besides which there is nothing else. Hence, according to him, the existence of soul and matter is not in any sense unreal ; they are two parts of the infinite whole, the remainder being the repository of infinite power, knowledge and other blessed qualities, which is called God. The dualist believes in more than one infinity, each being a summation of infinite finite parts and holds that besides the infinities, there can be finite things as well. God and Nature are two such infinities and besides there is an infinite number of finite individual souls. The infinity of the Christians is an union of three infinities, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost in one.

Incarnation of God means His embodiment in human form. Human form is finite and can therefore manifest only what is finite. Consequently divine incarnation would be a possibility if there is some finite element in the Godhead, capable of manifestation in the finite human form. If a man's idea of God is an infinity which is infinite at every point and has no finite element, to him divine incarnation is an impossibility. On the other hand, it is a possibility to those whose idea of God is an infinity which is the summation of finite parts infinite in number. It would then mean embodiment of some of the finite parts of the infinite whole. That whole comprises in it infinite power, knowledge, bliss and other qualities and of these some part, exceedingly great, yet not infinite, and not certainly too great for manifestation in a human form, is manifested in the incarnation. In consistence with human experience and

reason, divine incarnation is understandable only in this sense.

This understood and states of existence other than human admitted, the belief that, after the state of His earthly existence, an incarnation, if not withdrawn and re-absorbed in the Fountainhead at the completion of His earthly mission, can exist in some other state of existence, whence He can continue to help the world, would not be regarded an absurdity.

What the real nature of God is, whether He incarnates or not, what is the manner of His incarnation if He does incarnate, are questions He and he to whom He reveals Himself can rightly answer. In our bigotry, ignorance and self-conceit, each of us may be sure that his idea of God is the best, that his conception of divine incarnation and of its possibility or impossibility is the most rational; but careful reflection in a spirit of love of truth ought to remind us that our ideas of God are *our ideas*, that, knowing as we do the liability of human judgment to error, we cannot be too chary of considering others in the wrong and ourselves in the right. Let us with this ennobling diffidence in the correctness of our understanding approach with supreme reverence those great souls, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Christ and others, whose presence during life and words and memory thereafter kindle the light of hope, consolation and truth in the darkness of head and heart of millions of suffering humanity and are therefore naturally worshipped by them as incarnations of God.

The blessed Lord Krishna, one of the great incarnations, says in the Gita, "Whenever religion declines and irreligion prevails, O Bharata, I body myself forth. To protect the righteous, to destroy the evil doers and to establish true religion, I come into being in every age" (IV. 7, 8), "Fools disregard Me clad in human form, not knowing My higher

nature as the supreme Lord of all beings" (IX. 11), and in His infinite love for Arjuna who was unable to see His higher nature with the mortal eye, He gave him a divine eye to behold His Lordly form holding the whole universe in its bosom. The difference between an ordinary soul and an incarnation is that the former knows himself only as a finite being, a man subject to the limitations of Nature, while the latter is always conscious He is an infinite being, the one Lord of all matter and souls, almighty and omniscient, yet He is manifesting but a part of His infiniteness through a finite form. The common man cannot understand Him, just as he cannot understand many things, but men highly advanced in spirituality recognize their God in Him and like Arjuna, worship him as the ideal embodiment of Divinity in man.

It is believed that the body of an incarnation is not like the bodies of other men. It is made up of the most Sattvic particles of matter, every one of which reflects, as it were, the rays of the divine light. Physiologically, every cell of that organism is highly developed in consciousness and helps the manifestation of the divine consciousness through the whole of which it is a part. Even stories and beliefs are not wanting, relating to the birth of His body not from human parents but as a supernatural event.

An incarnation, being God, does not need go through any spiritual practice to know Himself. But He comes to help the world. Of His own free will He may therefore go through spiritual practices that the world may see and learn them. He, for the time being, acts like man that His actions may be intelligible to man, shewing, by treading them Himself, the paths required to be trod by him to reach the goal. He is like the king playing the part of a beggar on the stage, knowing all the while he is the king and not a beggar.

Yet His actions are said to display extraordinariness and compel people to realize that He is not of their kind. What others do in years, He may do in days. "He can transmit spirituality with a touch, even with a mere wish. The lowest and the most degraded characters become in one second saints at His command," says Swami Vivekananda. Many miracles are also ascribed to Him.

"When a huge tidal wave comes," says Bhagavata Sri Ramakrishna, "all the little brooks and ditches become inundated; so when an incarnation comes, a tidal wave of spirituality breaks upon the world"; the atmosphere becomes surcharged with spirituality, so to speak. Blessed are they born at the time and willing to avail themselves of the wind of divine grace to sail across the waters of life.

The difference between sages and incarnations is stated as under: The sages free themselves from the bondage of Nature and realize God through long prayers and hard practices. But they cannot free others. An incarnation can free and impart spirituality to hundreds if He wills. "A sage is like a reed floating on water, which sinks with the weight of even a crow; an incarnation is like a mighty raft of wood floating down a stream, that carries on it hundreds and does not sink" (Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna). Only an incarnation can say, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. XI, 28), "Giving up all the formalities of religion, seek Me as thy sole refuge. I will liberate thee from all sins; do not grieve" (Gita XVIII, 66). But as through Him, only a part of His infiniteness can be manifested as we shewed before, it is irrational to suppose that He can save the whole world. True, He saves many. Also it is true that, in spite of there being several incarnations, the world is not saved yet. So can we not safely say that

He saves only as many as it is possible to save through that much of His infiniteness which admits of manifestation in a human form?

Christianity and Vedanta are the two religions that advocate the belief in incarnation. While the former upholds Christ was the only incarnation, Vedanta believes God's incarnation cannot be limited by time, place or nationality. According to it, there were many incarnations in the past and there will be many in the future. Every religion can have them. Nor are incarnations limited by distinction of sex. They appear in masculine or in feminine form according to the needs of the time and the place.

The climax of egotism is reached when man institutes comparison between those he takes as incarnations. Sunk deep in the mire of lust and gold, with the mind perverted by wrong prepossessions, how can we understand incarnations, not to speak of holding comparisons between them? An incarnation is as inscrutable as God. Of the infinite aspects of the Godhead, each incarnation may represent one or more, and the representation of each is great in its own way. It is held that incarnations can be for spiritual as well as for temporal purposes.

We are far from insinuating that incarnation is the only way through which to realize God. God is omnipresent and dwells in the inmost depth of every soul. Look for Him there and He will reveal Himself. Incarnation is regarded as only one of the many ways through which we reach Him. But it is the easiest way. One can get water anywhere by sinking a well with much toil and trouble. As such, an incarnation is the flowing spring from which the spiritually thirsty easily allay their thirst. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna, an incarnation is a ready made mould of the Divinity in which one has only to cast oneself to be divine.

Try as we may, so long as we are bound by

the limitations of the human mind and senses, we can never conceive God except as a Man, as a Being with the highest human attributes, without the human imperfections; all our endeavours to think of Him as He is in His absolute perfection prove miserably futile, our best and highest conceptions of Him are at best our conceptions of an ideally perfect Man. Infinite, omniscience, omnipotence, and similar other terms convey to us no idea unaffected by our human nature. Only when we transcend the limitations of our human nature, we know God as He is. Convinced that, in keeping with our human nature, we have to think of God as an ideally perfect Man and so thinking, form only false notions of Him, we may not try to form any notion of Him at all, but struggle in the dark to catch a glimpse of His light which we know is at the same time completely beyond the ken of our vision. Or, because we cannot help thinking God as Man, we may try to see Him through a *man* in whom there is a manifestation of Him, that is, through an incarnation. Either method leads to the goal. Detachment of the mind from things other than God is the primal condition for His realization. Those with whom religion is not talk but practice know how hard it is to detach the mind from things. Harder becomes the task when there is nothing else for the mind to attach itself to. In the first method, because one forms no notion of God, one has to detach one's mind from all things, without at the same time having any other idea to which the mind can be attached. In the second method, one can do so by attaching the mind to an incarnation. Hence easier becomes realization in the latter than in the former method. "Greater is their trouble whose thoughts are set on the Unmanifest; for the Goal, the Unmanifest, is very hard for the embodied to attain" (Gita XII. 5). Moreover the very attachment of the mind to an incarnation fills it gradually

with His characteristic divine love, knowledge and power. 'Whatever one thinks, one becomes.'

Again, on account of the very limitations of our human constitution, we are bound to see and have relations with God as a Man, as an incarnation. How to man, even the highest manifestation of the Unmanifest can be but a human embodiment of It, we do not understand.

Two classes of men do not worship God as Man—the Paramahamsa, who has risen above the limits of human nature and therefore can realize and worship God as He is in His superhuman perfection and the man, with whom religion is not realization, but mere talk or, at the most, struggle in the dark.

DIVINITY-IN-MAN

I AM NOT OLD

O tell me not that I am old
Or that I old shall grow;
But let eternal youth be stamped
Upon my wrinkled brow.

The eye may dim, the ear may dull,
The cheek be furrowed too;
The hair may streak with silver locks,
But I grow old, oh no!

Does God grow old, do angels gray?
Do spirits grow infirm?
Bent, bowed upon a friendly staff
Do the immortals lean?

We can't grow old if we renew
Our spirits day by day;
Drink in new life, new hope, new truths,
And wipe the false away.

Truth is immortal, and shall bloom
In everlasting youth;
Old age is stamped on what is false.
It dies, but not the truth.

—H. J. Fisher

A HYMN TO SHIVA

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

शिवस्तोत्रम्
 स्वामिविवेकानन्दविरचितम्
 ॐ नमः शिवाय
 निखिलभुवनजन्मस्थेमभङ्गप्ररोहाः
 अकलितमहिमानः कलिपता यत्र तस्मिन् ।
 सुविमलगगनाभे ईशसंस्थेऽप्यनीशे
 मम भवतु भवेऽस्मिन् भासुरो भावबन्धः ॥

TRANSLATION:--

Salutation to Shiva

In whom, resembling the clear sky, are attributed the phenomena of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe, glory immeasurable, may the burning devotion of this my life be attached to him, who, being the Lord of all, yet transcends himself.

In the utter annihilation of delusion whose overruling is established; whose manifest, surpassing love has obtained for him the name Mahadeva or the great god; the warm embrace of whom, love personified, displays the universe within the heart of man; his infinite expanse is but a semblance.

In which blows the tempest of the accumulated effects of past desires and actions, and violently stirs the energies, like water surging into waves; in which plays on the dual consciousness of ego and non-ego; I salute that highly unstable mind, which is centered in Shiva, the abode of calm.

Where the ideas of the parent and the produced, the purified thoughts and the innumerable various forms become the real one; where, the wind of modification being stilled, the conceptions of within and without cease to exist; I worship that Hara, the suppression of mental activities!

From whom all darkness has melted away, the radiant white light, beautiful as white lotus, whose smile sheds a splendour of knowledge, who is realized by un-divided meditation in the hearts of the self-controlled, may that swan of my mind-lake protect me prostrating before him.

निहतनिखिलमोहेऽधीशता यत्र रुदा
 प्रकटितपरमप्रेम्ना महादेवसंज्ञः ।
 अरिथिलपरिरंभः प्रेमरूपस्य यस्य
 हृदि प्रणायति विश्वं व्याजमात्रं विभुत्वम् ॥

वहति विपुलवातः पूर्वसंस्काररूपः
 प्रमथति बलवृन्दं घूर्णितेवोर्मिमाला ।
 प्रचलति खलु युग्मं युस्मदस्मत् प्रतीतं
 अतिविकलितरूपं नौप्रि चित्तं शिवस्थम् ॥

जनकजनितभावो वृत्तयः संस्कृताश्च
 अगणनवहुरूपो यत्र एको यथार्थः ।
 शमितविकृतिवाते यत्र नान्तर्वहिश्च
 तमहह हरमीडे चित्तवृत्तेनिरोधम् ॥

गलिततिमिरमालः द्युम्रतेजप्रकाशः
 धवलकमलशोभः ज्ञानपुञ्जाह्रहासः ।
 यमिजनहृदिगम्यः निष्कलं ध्यायमानः
 प्रणतमवतु मां सः मानसराजहंसः ॥

दुरितदलनदक्षं दक्षजादसदोषं
कलितकलकलङ्कं कम्भकहास्यान्तं।
परहितकरणाय प्राणविच्छेदसूत्रं
नतनयननियुक्तं नीलकण्ठं नमामः ॥

The master-remover of evil, whose censure the daughter of Daksha could not accept, who bears the dark stain, who is beautiful like the charming white water-lily, who is ever ready to part with life for the good of others, we salute that Nilkantha, whose gaze is fixed on the humble.

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

RO soul that thinks has ever lived without wondering more or less about the vast "Beyond"—the Past—the Future. Every human being has the right to ask the reason "why," and when offered a system of Philosophy that will not only help in life's struggle, but give to man the goal and the answer all are forever seeking, it is natural that each person will want to investigate for himself.

Believe nothing till you have found out for yourself the truth of it. Truth is a reality that needs no support.

The "Vedanta Philosophy" is spoken of by Max Muller in these words (Life and sayings of Ramakrishna page 91)—"These ideas in a more or less popular form seem to pervade the Hindu mind from the earliest to the latest date. They are often exaggerated and caricatured so as to become repulsive to a European mind, but in their purity and simplicity they contain an amount of truth which can no longer be put aside as merely curious, or disposed of as mystic, and without an argument that everything that is called mystic has really nothing to do with either religion or philosophy." And again: "When we have first learnt all that can be learnt from the Vedanta, it will be time to begin to criticize it, or, if possible, to improve it. We study the systems of Plato and Aristotle, of Spinoza and Kant, not as containing the full

and perfect truth, cut and dry, but as helping us on towards the truth."

Each soul travelling through this struggling path of life's way, is forever wondering how it may escape the fearful misery that human beings meet with in every corner of the globe.

If man will stop for but a moment in this whirl of living, and contemplate his own *mind*, he will find by analysing, that this is something which is never destroyed. It is something which by its own nature eternally pure and perfect, will, when truly understood and deeply studied, give a Peace and Happiness, satisfy all desires, in a way that nothing else ever can.

You ask me how I know this? You say where will *you* find the truth of it? You tell me to prove it, and I answer you that you *can* prove it to yourself, that it is taught through the Vedanta School of Philosophy, just what is meant in detail by attaining this glorious Infinite Joy and Bliss.

Vedanta is the most ancient system of Philosophy in India and opens a door to knowledge, that may be entered by all who truly have the earnest desire *to know*. The word literally means, "End of all wisdom." No religion or philosophy is of vital importance to a person, or mass of people, that does not sincerely and with intense desire wish to develop and advance the highest Self, through

its teachings. This is one very apparent reason that modern so-called religion is losing its foot-hold. Real *Christianity* is so buried beneath the doctrines and dogmas of *Churchianity* that never before have the churches felt the large amount of thinking minds that have drifted away from Church going.

In a booklet published by the Vedanta Society of New York these words are used :

"Vedanta teaches the truths taught by Christ and other Incarnations of God, brings light to dispel the darkness of ignorance, and makes clear the real spirit of Christ's religion. It declares that revelation is the disclosure of the Divine Spirit in the individual soul, being ever from within and not from without; and that for the soul there is neither caste, nor creed, nor sex. Going beyond toleration and brotherhood, it teaches that each soul is potentially Divine and that we are all children of Immortal Bliss. It likewise shows the way to the realization of the truth "I and my Father are one." The religion of Vedanta is not built around any personality, neither does it depend upon any particular book, but embraces all the Scriptures of the World. It accepts every phase of religious thought, and teaches active co-operation with all the various sects and creeds of special religions, which are but partial expressions of one underlying Universal Religion. Vedanta harmonizes with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, and gives to religion a scientific and philosophic basis. It also points out the evil effect of popular superstition and describes the way to mental and spiritual freedom.

Since the Parliament of religions at the World's Fair in Chicago, this philosophy has been expounded in this country by the Swamis or Spiritual Teachers from India.

The object of Vedanta is not to form a new sect or creed, or to make proselytes, but to explain through logic and reason the spiritual laws that govern our lives; to show that the True Religion of the Soul is not antagonistic

to, but in harmony with, philosophy and science; to establish the Universal Religion which underlies all the various sects and creeds of special religions; to propagate the principles taught by the great seers of Truth and religious leaders of different countries and illustrated by their lives; and to help mankind in the practical application of those principles in their spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical needs."

True religion as Vedanta teaches is to develop the character. Swami Abhedananda uses these words when speaking of religion : "Its object is to unfold the divine nature of the soul, and make it possible to live on the spiritual plane, its ideal being the realization of the Absolute Truth and the manifestation of Divinity in the actions of the daily life."

Vedanta teaches that to reach this realization there are many roads. One does not have to become a hermit, or an ascetic, but it may also be attained by him who knows how to live *in* the world and be not of it. Vedanta Philosophy maintains that mankind are drawn to religious teachings in four different manners. There is a class of mind that like to express their religious thoughts through ethical work. Others prefer the devotional attitude, and worship satisfies their hearts. Again there are those who find their ideals through their mystical nature, and prefer the methods of concentration and meditation. Fourthly, a strongly analytical type of mind, wants logic and reason to answer every path they trod, and therefore walk in the way of philosophy and discrimination.

Higher Knowledge is self-illumination; and each of the above methods, are classed under a certain Yoga study. *Yoga*, coming from the root (*yuj*) to join, (thus Divine and Human) and is familiar to us in our English word "yoke."

The different practices of the "Yoga teachings," all lead to the same goal, Self Realization. The Upanishads, a part of the great

Vedas, are the books which form the foundation of the Vedanta Philosophy's teachings. They are the Scriptures of modern India.

To have the beautiful knowledge which the Vedanta has to offer one, in the heart of a big western modern city, where the struggling for existence, and the suffering of many is so intense, awakens one to a longing to know more of the wonderful Light, and indeed to be one of the earnest students, who are striving towards that Truth of Realization.

All the greatest teachers of the world have taught the same essence. Jesus Christ said : "My Father and I are One." Ramakrishna said: "The beatific vision occurs only in the heart which is calm and rapt up in Divine Communion." "Know thyself," has been repeated in many forms, and the *Self* when truly known leads to God.

If man will but learn that all visible material things are but temporary, that the Eternal is all that is worth taking time to study, that the more energy we give up in enjoying earthly and material pleasures, the longer we keep our feet from treading the Path which is Real and Everlasting ; and which when once even getting a peep of, one absolutely longs, hungers and thirsts for the Great Glory that awaits us.

The saints of all times, the Bible of all nations have always told these truths. The modern people of both America and Europe are too apt to look upon the subjects as spoken of here with a certain air of "old-fashionedness." The majority of to-day's scientists quietly smile, or treat silently the facts which are preached and practically demonstrated to those who seek earnestly and sincerely into the Vedanta's teachings ; as if it all were pretty theory for those who care to amuse or console themselves with the imagination.

No philosophy or ethics or religion is so strong as that which asks no one to accept *anything* on faith. The Vedanta teachers, only

say : practise what we teach you honestly, and then if you do not find this Higher Truth, you will have the right to say, that what we affirm is not so.

There's nothing secret in the study of Vedanta. All who wish to know may learn. The goal of most religions is freedom from earth's sorrows. Draw a comparison of the goal of each religious train of thought. Heaven the goal, is always depicted as free of care and sorrow. Now let us analyze the possibilities of Heaven as drawn by the orthodox sects of Christendom. What do we find? A place where when we die, or leave the body in this world, greets us with love and kindness, angels and harps, a meeting with the Personal God, as taught by the Churches. All earth's sorrows gone.

Each sect differs only in degree ; and yet in such a heaven how could a soul be happy who felt some beloved friend might not go there? What a dreamy, dull place, not even to progress in knowledge and evolve higher! Some sects take us through a chapter of Purgatory or a half-way house before reaching Heaven. Some even, yes most all, preach the other side,—Hell—where many go, as their goal, if their lives have so been lived to be thus punished. Many people who have no belief, hold themselves on the platform of materialistic science in remaining with the future as an open question. They say : "They do not know if this existence is all or not,"—there is no more illogical position in the world, for if that honestly was believed they would end all at once, and either close life's sad journey, or find out.

The goal of freedom of the Vedanta is indeed reached by a process that is scientific, practical, gradual, and is placed within the reach of every one. No religion ever had a goal as high, and no man who has ever earnestly sought the goal, but has found the very first taste of his knowledge of *freedom*, worth all the effort he has put forth to gain it. And

this is attainable, to us here, now, in these bodies. We do not have to die to attain Heaven. This whole universe is as one continuous life. Forever being in motion by the vibratory forces through Nature. One should think of the different kinds of everyday living. To speak of living the "Strenuous Life" which has become a by-word of to-day, we do not attach the meaning of what the "Strenuous Life" really means.

He who lives in the turmoil of commercial life, or following an existence that fights its way along the roads for *Things*—getting, grasping, working for, and struggling in the turmoil of rush and hurry of modern living, each one gathering unto himself all of the comforts and luxuries he may attain, not only for himself, but those he cares for, is indeed living a wearing, tearing strenuous life, but gaining little. The *real strenuous living* is that which takes upon itself to go without most everything which we nearly all live for to-day, and strenuously struggle for the Higher Knowledge, the Goal which all are either consciously or unconsciously seeking.

Accepted *simplicity of life* is the real sacrifice of flesh desires, and the worldly temporal pleasure, to seek and gain those joys of the Greater Life, the Purer Vision, the Eternal Life which must in time be sought for and found.

Poverty—not beggarliness, is the real strenuous life—without brass bands and popular applause, without the superabundance of wealth that covers the soul as with a blanket tied down. Wealth getting, as it is to-day, is an ideal of the people which enters into bone and marrow, until we are all so unconscious of that Inner Wealth, which only waits to be loved and tended, to grow to that dimension of real Wealth and Light that is Eternal.

Among the English speaking people of the world, it is poverty that needs to be sung about with bold and noble meaning. People are afraid to be poor, the great race is for

wealth, and each person explains his needs as not luxuries, but plain necessities. To be free of material attractions and to give time and plenty of it to the study of the Inner Life, are not only not understood but silently smiled at. Prof. William James, of the Chair of Philosophy in Harvard University, uses these words: "The prevalent fear of poverty among the educated classes, is the worst moral disease from which civilization suffers."...

This side of life's study could be carried on to a most valuable and interesting extent, and it would be found that the state of consciousness we call normal or rational is only one of many which exists so within and about us that only the flimsiest thread divides them. Man can so train himself that he will discover many planes of consciousness, and yet gaining the knowledge through honest labor and desire, will be able to know each one, and compare them, and realize this one little life and plane of existence is but a small chapter of our being.

The majority of humanity go through life not even suspecting what is so near them, so truly a part of themselves, and belonging to them. It would only take a touch of the right stimulus to awaken all, in their entirety, and as we develop and find that each subtler step of knowledge leads us on and on to other grander heights of attainment, until the goal is reached, and Realization of the very Highest is Bliss Immortal. And all this study of one line and another along the thoughts of the finer self, but leads us back to the beginning of my article—"No soul has ever lived without wondering more or less about the vast Beyond." It is the Vedanta Philosophy which, when sincerely and devoutly followed, will bring one to the reality of those qualities which are the Highest, and are Eternal and Everlasting.—E. P. Cape in *Mind* (New York).

REVIEW

THE WEB OF INDIAN LIFE

In charming, feeling language Sister Nivedita presents us a picture of the bright side of Indian life in her book, "The Web of Indian Life."^{*} The work is the index of a soul aglow with love for India. Its reading, in places, touches the deeps of the heart, and induces the fervour of meditation. How sweet is the touch—she was sitting by the bedside of a boy dying of plague, who was delirious, but "sometimes, as memory returned, he would smile at her, mistaking her for his mother, and once he snatched at her hand and then carried his own to his lips,"—"Sweet; unknown mother, forgive me these thefts of love, that rent the veil from a graciousness so perfect, an adoration so deep!" How touching is the delineation of Siva, "He is the very soul of gentleness, refusing none. Up here, have gathered round Him all those who were weary of earth, having found no acceptance amongst the fortunate. The serpents, whom all the world hates and denies, come to Kailash, and Mahadeva finds room for them in His great heart. And the tired beasts come—for He is the refuge of animals—and it is one of these, a shabby old bull, that He specially loves and rides upon. And here, too, come the spirits of all those men and women who are turbulent and troublesome and queer, the bad boys and girls of the grown-up world, as it were. All the people who are so ugly that no one wants to see them; those who do things clumsily, and talk loudly, and upset everything, though

they mean no harm, and the poor things who are ridden by one idea, so that they never can see straight, but always seem a little mad—such are the souls on whom He alone has mercy. He is surrounded by them, and they love and worship Him. He uses them to do His errands, and they are known as Siva's demons."

The opening chapter, 'The Setting of the Warp,' tells of her first happy days in a little Calcutta lane, when a house of her own, in which to eat, sleep, and conduct a girls' school, and full welcome accorded at any hour of day or night that she might choose to invade the privacy of a group of women friends hard by, were the conditions under which she made her entrance into the Hindu life.

The warp set, the weaving is, naturally enough, commenced with the two choice threads, 'The Eastern Mother,' and 'The Hindu Woman as Wife' with 'Love strong as Death.' "A yearning love that can never refuse us; a benediction that for ever abides with us; a presence from which we cannot grow away; a heart in which we are always safe; sweetness unfathomed, bond unbreakable, holiness without a shadow—all these indeed, and more, is motherhood. Small wonder that the innermost longing of every Hindu is to find himself at home in the Universe, with all that comes thereby of joy or sorrow, even as a baby lying against its mother's heart!" "In motherhood alone does marriage become holy; without it, the mere indulgence of affection has no right to be." With Indians, the love of their mothers has been a passion, a sacred worship, for which what is the price paid by Hindu women?

* William Heinemann, 21 Bedford Street, W. C. London, 1904, 8½ x 5½, pp. 301. Price, colonial edition, 2s. 6d. To be had of Messrs. Newman & Co., Dalhousie Square, Calcutta.

"The price is the absolute inviolability of marriage. The worship is, at bottom, the worship of steadfastness and purity.....A widow remarried is no better in Hindu eyes than a woman of no character, and this is the case even where the marriage was only betrothal, and the young fiancée has become what we know as a child-widow." All the Hindu wife's dreams are of "the saints—women mighty in renunciation: Sita, whose love found its richest expression in the life-long farewell that made her husband the ideal king; Sati, who died rather than hear a word against Siva, even from her own father; and Uma, realising that her love was given in vain, yet pursuing the more eagerly the chosen path." And in the long years of the widow's life "we picture the Madonna standing always beneath the Cross."

Regarding the existing education of a Hindu woman, "if a thorough training in a national mode of living, and that extremely complicated, be an education, she has something..... If a knowledge of language, poetry, and folk-lore, with all thereby connoted of logical and imaginative development, form an education, she has this..... Poor women who may not be able to read and write are deeply, and even passionately, possessed of the spirit of the ancient culture." And "it is quite evident that if the centre of social gravity is some day to be shifted, if the intellectual atmosphere of India is yet to be saturated with fresh ideals, not only must her womanhood participate in the results of the implied revolution, but they must contribute largely to bringing it about," for it is the home that fills life with inspiration. "The objective of the old education of Indian women lay in *character*, the new cannot aim lower. The distinctive element, therefore, in their future training cannot be reading and writing—though these will undoubtedly grow more common—but the power to grasp clearly and with enthusiasm the ideas of nationality,

national interests, and the responsibility of the individual to race and country." "When the women see themselves in their true place, as related to the soil on which they live, as related to the past out of which they have sprung; when they become aware of the needs of their own people, on the actual colossal scale of those needs; when the motherheart has once awakened in them to beat for land and people, instead of family, village, and homestead alone, and when the mind is set to explore facts in the service of that heart—then and then alone shall the future of Indian womanhood dawn upon the race in its actual greatness; then shall a worthy education be realised; and then shall the true national ideal stand revealed. Such a change, however, is only possible as a direct growth out of old conceptions. The national idea cannot be imposed from without—it must develop from within."

Speaking incidentally of the national ideal here, the author observes: "*Western Science must be recognised as holy. The idea of that Science must be grasped and pursued for its own sake.*" Western sciences "must be felt in India as new modes of the apprehension of truth, studied passionately, without ulterior object, as the religious experience is now followed, at the cost of all..... Out of such a revolution, but as an incident, not as its main goal, must inevitably arise a development of mechanical skill which, in the East, might steer clear of the demoralisation produced elsewhere by the worship of usefulness and privilege." Evidently the pursuit of the Western sciences is urged not from the common-sense view of their practical utility, not as a means of social well-being, but as an end by itself, like facts and truths of religion. It would be quite in accordance with the spiritual genius of Indian civilization if the ideal were the co-ordination of the material sciences to the spiritual, the regarding of them as so many means and modes of the appre-

hension of the One Spiritual Truth, through the external world. But if we read these lines along with such others as, "As Roman Catholicism is but one element inhering in a great whole called Christianity, and as a man may well claim to be a good Christian without being a Catholic, so the religious system of Hinduism is only a fragment inhering in a vast social-industrial-economic scheme called the *dharma*, and a man may well and rightly be the servant of the *dharma*, without calling himself a Hindu," we are constrained, the substitution of the word *dharma* for religion notwithstanding, to observe that the author draws a distinction between religion and so-called secularism, and then proceeds to deny pre-eminence to religion, regarding it as "only a fragment," in the future national ideal. Whatever else this ideal might be, it is not the synthesis for which India stands.

No, the distinction between religion and secularism is a myth. Is not there the *Sruti*, 'All this is verily Brahman, in the light of which the man at the machine wheel can surely be a Brahma-jnani, if he handles it with the consciousness that he is verily handling Brahman? Astronomy, geology, physics, biology, history, sociology, economics, and all the sciences, industries and arts, are so many windows for the expression and the vision of the Infinite, religion calls God. All the agencies and equipments of civilization, spiritualized by this light, have their legitimate places in religion. And from India, the birth-land of the conception, the world will draw the inspiration for its recognition and realization. Religion is India's inheritance, her gift to the world, not a fragment but the whole of her being.

However the author's conception of Hinduism as "no sect, but a synthesis; no church, but a university of spiritual culture," is truly Hindu-like. She clearly perceives that Islam is not excluded from that synthesis. "In

Bengal and Behar, the sons of Hindu and Mohammedan gentlemen grow up in the closest fraternity and fellowship.....In the Moslem zenanas of the same districts the Hindu babies of the village are privileged guests.....Every Mohammedan fakir is sought by Hindu as well as Mohammedan devotees. In the South, narrowly orthodox as the South is counted, the proudest feature of Trevandrum is the shrine dedicated to a Mohammedan princess, who forsook courts and palaces for the worship of Trevandrum's local god.....The familiar sight of the Mohammedan *bhisti*, holding his goatskin below the hydrant-mouth for water, and the Hindu water-carrier with his earthen pot coming in his turn, is an instance of the contrast as it now exists. Two different civilisations stand side by side, but they are friendly castes, not rival nationalities.....Allah is of course the Personal God: but then the worshipper of Vishnu has always had to admit his brother's right to offer praise to Siva, though the name left himself unstirred. Why not Allah, therefore, equally? The Hindu uses images: to the Mussulman the image is abhorrent. True, but every Hindu hopes to escape some day from the necessity of using images.....Are not the saints for ever telling the idolater that even to name the Infinite Unity is sacrilege? And what Mohammedan saint has failed to say the same? The dispute about the image, in the light of such facts, becomes a mere difference of opinion as to the use of the concrete in the early stages of an education..." "Hence it would appear that the important points at issue between Hindus and Mussulmans are rather details of purification and domestic practice, than religious or doctrinal. This fact becomes increasingly evident as the higher phases of the two faiths are reached. For the more completely either is realised, the more perfectly is it fused in the other. Sufism leads the soul by love, and the Vedanta leads it by knowledge, love, or emancipated

motive, as the case may be ; but for both alike the theme is of a common goal, where all sense of difference shall cease, and the small self be swallowed up in the universal. Of each of the two faiths, then, it may be said, that it has nothing to lose and everything to gain by the more complete development of the other. Mohammed, Krishna, Buddha, Sankaracharya, are not so many deplorable obstacles in each other's paths, but rather widely separated examples of a common type —the radiant Asiatic personage, whose conception of nationality lies in a national righteousness, and whose right to be a leader of men rests on the fact that he has seen God face to face. Such souls cannot fail to recognise each other, and the Prophet was not slow to salute Moses and the Christ, the only examples of his own order whose names he knew." A single united Indian nationality has to be largely based on a clear understanding of this close relationship between Hinduism and Islam by their respective votaries.

Her observation on the doctrine of Divine Incarnation is as searching as it is broad : "It is absurd, says the Hindu, to think that such an Incarnation, supposing it to occur at all, could visit the world only once. Is respect of persons a divine attribute? Or is the need of mankind at any time less than complete? Can we believe, again, that the power of creative energy to assume and throw off the shell of personality is exhausted in a single effort?.....The orthodox Hindu is thus usually in no position to deny the supernatural character of the Babe of Bethlehem. He is only unable to admit that the nature of Christ stands alone in the history of the world, holding that his own country has seen even more than the three—Rama, Krishna, and Buddha—who were His brothers. Still more cogently does he claim sometimes that all these and possibly others of whom he has not heard, are but one soul, one expression of Godhead coming back at different times to

lay hold on the hearts of men."

Her understanding of the Gita is equally true : "Spirituality is with it no retreat from men and things, but a burning fire of knowledge that destroys bondage, consumes sluggishness and egoism, and penetrates everywhere. Not the withdrawn, but the transfigured life, radiant with power and energy, triumphant in its selflessness, is religion."

Caste is studied in the sense of an "honour, that is to say, an ideal sentiment by whose means society spontaneously protects itself from some danger against which it is otherwise defenceless." "The true failure of caste occurs whenever it establishes such an ascendancy of social opinion over the individual's conscience that his power of advance is impeded and he becomes less of a man, or less really beneficent socially, by remaining more of a gentleman,"—the failure which, we know, is now complete in India. We fail to see how it can be held that "that India understands the doctrine of heredity is demonstrated by caste." A caste originally represented a status of the community, based not on birth, but on the qualities possessed and the professions followed. The present caste system, determined by birth, owes its origin greatly to latter-day degenerate selfishness that tries to keep others down and aloof, and certainly not to any knowledge of heredity that the Hindus could boast of. Heredity—which, by the way, is not yet a proved doctrine—may, if desired, be associated with the system, as it obtains at present.

Enough has been said to indicate the varied interests of the work the many beauties of which can be perceived only by a study of the whole. We wish it a wide circulation.

An Indian newspaper as educator and guide of the Indian public is worthy of its vocation in the measure it can combine with the possession and intelligent appreciation of its ancient national culture, the spirit of the modern times. We have been glad to note the increasingly vigorous expression of this combination in *New India*. We admire its manliness and sincerity and wish it success.

Q. & A.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

These two columns are set apart for the use of readers. Any one can send queries and answers. As the object of starting this page is to afford an opportunity to our readers for mutual help and co-operation in removing each other's doubts and for sharing the benefit of each other's thoughts and studies, the Editor does not propose to answer any queries but invites the readers to send in answers to all queries. The answers must be direct and short and only the best shall be published. Each answer should bear the number of the query to which it is a reply. All queries and answers should be addressed to the Editor, with the initials Q. & A. in a corner of the envelope. Correspondents must send their full names and addresses, not necessarily for publication. They should write on one side of the paper only, and use a separate sheet for each query or answer.

QUERIES

7. What is non-attachment?—A. N. W.
8. How can Karma and Jnana be co-ordinated?—C. C. H.
9. What is the true basis of morality?—M. B. T.
10. The modern system of Hindu castes is a much abused institution. Can nothing be said for it? What is its worst feature?—An enquirer.

REFERENCE WANTED

11. Will any reader of P. B. kindly let me know exactly where in the Sankhya Philosophy is it said that the external eyes etc. are not the organs of senses, but mere instruments, the real organs are inside?—K. S. A.

12. Will any of your readers refer me to the poetry of Tennyson in which the following lines occur:—

“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.”

—P. T. V.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES

IT is a curious fact in natural history that no bird can fly backwards.

FEWER children are being born into the world in proportion to the number of parents.

BEFORE the Paris Academy of Sciences M. Bouchard stated that mice exposed to emanations from radium died in six hours.

THE manufacture of Chrome leather is officially reported to have been successfully carried out at the Madras School of Arts.

SCIENTISTS estimate that there is energy enough in fifty acres of sunshine to run the machinery of the world, could it be concentrated.

A NUMBER of miniature trees, now on exhibition at the Horticultural Show at the London Botanical Gardens, have been reared by chemical agency and without soil.

A NEW comet was discovered in the northern part of the constellation Hercules by Mr. W. R. Brooks at the Smith Observatory, Geneva, New York, on the evening of the 16th April last.

THE latest bird to become extinct is the Californian condor, the spread of whose wings was 12ft. Four hundred pounds is offered for an egg, but none has been found for seventeen years.

IN the tropical northern territory of South Australia travellers need not carry a compass. The district abounds with the nests of the magnetic or meridian ant. The longer axes of these nests point due north and south.

MOST of the houses in Japan are built of wood, and if any houses should be destroyed by fire or any such catastrophe, another can be easily substituted in the place, for there are ready-made houses in the carpenter's shops!

RELIGION, in itself expresses the perfect unity which is the distinctive mark of man's existence, both as an individual and in society, where all the constituent parts of his nature are made habitually to converge towards one common purpose.—*Comte.*

AUSTRALIA has no orphan asylums. Every child who is not supported by parents becomes a ward of the State, and is paid a pension for support and placed in a private family where board and clothes are provided until the fourteenth birthday.

AMERICA claims that the largest orchard in the world is in Missouri. It is the great Winans Orchard, near Marshfield, in Webster County. There are 86,000 apple trees, 40,000 peach trees, and 10,000 pear trees, just at proper bearing age. The acreage covered is 1,240.

FOR all its beauty, the lily of the valley is denounced by scientists on the ground that both the stalks and the flowers contain a poison. It is risky to put the stalks into one's mouth, as if the sap happens to get into even the tiniest crack in the lips it may produce swelling, often accompanied by pain.

TO encourage working people to establish homes of their own, Norway has founded a bank for working-men. It lends money at 3½ and 4 per cent., and gives the borrower forty-two years in which to pay the loan. The total cost of the house must not exceed £160, and the area of land must not be more than five acres.

HIS Highness the Rajah of Cochin has proposed to send one of his subjects to England

in order to have him taught the fine arts under an English artist, and Mr. Ravi Varma, the celebrated artist of Travancore, has recommended Mr. Rama Pathuwal, a distinguished graduate of the Madras University, for this purpose.

THE greatest man is he who chooses the Right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is calmest in storms and most fearless under menace and frowns, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering.

—*W. E. Channing.*

THE biggest carving knife ever manufactured may be seen at the World's Fair. This monster-blade is 30ft. in length, and has an edge as sharp as a razor. It is made out of the finest steel, and the handle is a masterpiece of the cutler's art, elaborately carved and beautifully polished. It would take a veritable giant to wield a knife like this.

A TRIAL was recently made in Austria to decide in how short a space of time living trees could be converted into newspapers. At Elsenthal, at 7-35 in the morning, three trees were sawn down; at 9-34 the wood, having been stripped of bark, cut up, and converted into pulp, became paper, and passed from the factory to the press, whence the first printed and folded copy was issued at ten o'clock. So that in 145 minutes the trees had become newspapers!

PERHAPS the strongest use to which music can be put is to stop the flow of blood from a wound. An Army doctor noticed that when a wounded soldier was taken to within an easy hearing distance of music, haemorrhage was greatly reduced or stopped. Neither he nor others, who confirmed his observations, could understand how this phenomenon was

brought about, but it is now believed that the vibration of the air produced by the music causes the patient to become faint, in which case the action of the heart is so considerably lessened that the overflow of blood is reduced.

GERMANY possesses a miniature but most useful railway to which no parallel is found in any country. Its peculiarity is that its trains have no drivers. It is used for carrying salt from the salt mines at Stassfurt. The trains consist of thirty trucks, each carrying half a ton of salt. The engines are electric, of twenty-four horse-power each. As it approaches a station, of which there are five along the line, the train automatically rings a bell, and the station attendant turns a switch to receive it. He is able to stop it at any moment. To start it again he stands on the locomotive, switches on the current, and then descends again before the engine has gained speed.

THE movement in favour of cremation is making considerable progress throughout Europe. At a recent meeting in Paris it was stated that in that city 6,628 cremations took place last year. Of other countries, the United States stand at the head, 3,160 cremations having taken place in 1902. In Germany there are 36 cremation societies, containing more than 22,030 members, the number of cremations last year being 1,074. These figures are the more remarkable that it is forbidden in Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria and Wurtemberg. In Great Britain there were 479 cremations during the year, as compared with 452 in 1902. Other countries which possess crematoriums are Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Japan, while they are also to be found at Montreal, Adelaide and Buenos Ayres.

THE printing work of London is much disturbed by the discovery of a new process which enables any number of copies to be

taken of any book, even the oldest, without setting a line of type. A compound has been discovered which may be spread upon a page without, in the slightest way, injuring the paper, and which refuses to rest upon ink. It can be easily removed to a stone, and there becomes the matrix for stereotype, which can be used for printing at once. Practical printers are experimenting to see whether they cannot save the cost of resetting old editions, and if certain practical difficulties are removed, there will be a change, not only in the reproduction of facsimiles of old books, but in the production of new ones. It will be no longer necessary to keep type standing, as a proof will be as good as a stereotype plate.

A Correspondent writes:—

Sri Ramakrishnananda Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission came to Sholapur on his way to Madras from Calcutta on the 19th instant. He delivered a lecture on Thursday the 21st idem in English on "Universal Religion" in the Sangit Theatre, which was highly appreciated by the Sholapur public. He very lucidly and impressively sketched the lives of Jesus Christ, Mohammed and Buddha and proved satisfactorily that the aim and object of all the religions is the same and that they are all the honest attempts of the different schools to realize the "self" and concluded by advising the audience not to quarrel with any religion however apparently contradictory, at the same time to sincerely practise the religion one is born in. The Swami delivered another lecture in the Ripon Hall on the 28th instant on "Happiness" and showed very clearly that real happiness cannot be had from anything changing or "Asat," the true knowledge of the "self" is the only means by which one can be happy. The audience, more than 300, heard the lecture with deep attention for more than an hour and a half. At the request of the public the Swami has agreed to deliver another lecture in the same hall on Sunday evening, the 31st instant, on "The Swami Vivekananda." The Swami holds conversational meetings every morning and evening. He goes to Madras on the 1st week of August.